

pleasures, "Do not eat." Just now, just for us now, that charming object, that interesting occupation, that sweet society, that pleasant place is, in the Lord's wise love, to be foregone. We are asked to "do without it"; to be "as a weaned child" about it (Ps. 131: 2). No condemnation is passed upon it. But *our use* of it would be against his will. And that makes it a test in the hands of our Friend, and an enticement in the hands of our enemy. We are at once tested and enticed by a conflict of pleasure with duty, where the pleasure in itself is pure.

Then, we see, in First Temptation, the very method and manner of the enemy's use of good for ends of evil—thru man's thought about the fruit for selfish reasons; that He does not want man to be as happy as possible, to be too near Himself, to be too much like Himself. So by that poisoned wound, the root of all sin is left in man. For sin, in its last analysis, is a discord between man and the blessed God. And we are at discord with his great love, not only when we openly defy his will, but when we suspect it, when we distrust it. That is "the little rift within the lute," which has in it the possible discords of all imaginable actual sinning.

When the primeval human heart first listened to that dreadful suggestion, that God would say one word to his beloved creature, made in his image, which was not a word of love, then man fell. And the nature which so fell has felt the shock of its fall ever since it has kept the discord ever since; so that only the hand of the slandered God of love can set it right, taking away from it this fatal mischief of distrust of him, putting into its hand "the shield of faith," of trust in him, "wherewith it shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph. 6: 16).

The Humanity of Christ

The positive and actual humanity of Jesus of Nazareth, in the sense that he had a human body and a human soul dwelling therein, and was in this respect like any other member of the human family, lies upon the face of his earthly history as given in the four gospels. He was not such merely in appearance, but such in reality, as truly as Saul of Tarsus. All the essentials that make a human being belonged to him. He "was made in the likeness of men," and was "found in fashion as a man," and is hence spoken of as "a man," and more often as the "Son of Man." The fact that the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in him, tho involving a great mystery, and that in his moral character he was absolutely sinless, does not make him the less human.

The Apostle, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, gives the following explanation of the humanity of Christ:

"But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death

for every man. For it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. . . Forasmuch then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that thru death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who thru the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore, in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted."

The central thought running all thru this language is the humanity of Jesus Christ, as a necessary adaptation to the great office of love and grace that was committed to him. He came into this world, not to live in ordinary human life and then die, but expressly "to save sinners." He assumed the nature of the beings he came to save; and the apostle's idea is that this was a needful and fitting arrangement. A work of atonement for sinners by suffering and death was to be accomplished by him; and for this purpose it was necessary that he should possess a nature in which suffering and death would be possible. As the sin-atonement "Lamb of God," and also as the "High Priest of our profession," he needed to be bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. His humanity was a condition in himself requisite to his work. This is the thought contained in the language above quoted.

The Apostle John, in the first three verses of his First Epistle, emphasizes, as follows, this humanity:

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life: (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us:) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ."

These words seem to have been written to refute an early heresy which arose among some who professed to be Christians, but who had adopted the doctrine that Christ was human only in *appearance*, and suffered and died only in appearance; in a word, that there was no positive reality in his history as a human being. While John recognized the fact of Christ's divinity, as may be easily seen by reading his Gospel, he equally recognized the fact of his humanity, and in the words above cited he emphasizes this fact.

There was no illusion about it. "The Word of life," by which phrase he meant Christ, had been manifested to him in a human form; and he was acquainted with that Word as thus manifested. His sense of hearing, his sense of sight, and his sense of touch alike attested to the *reality* of the manifestation in this form. "The Word was made flesh," as he says in his Gospel, "and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory as the glory of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth." This personal "Word," that in the beginning was "with God and was God," by whom "all things were made," and without whom "was not anything made that was made," dwelt with men in a human form; and John, the beloved disciple, saw him and heard him as he was "in the days of his flesh," and was not mistaken as to the fact of his positive humanity. He knew, as he assumes, whereof he affirmed.

What an amazing fact is thus presented to our faith! Jesus Christ, as a human being, born of the Virgin Mary, is, nevertheless, "God manifest in the flesh." In him as a man dwelt "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." The Godhead spoke and acted thru him. As divine, he came down from Heaven, and as human, he was born on earth, and arrayed in a garment of flesh and blood. No such visitor ever before came to this world. His life on earth is the wonder of all the ages. He himself is the great miracle around which all other miracles revolve, and also the central orb of the system that bears his name. He is the Life and Light of the world. His words are human in form and divine in authority and contents. What he says we are to believe and what he commands we are to do. His atonement in the flesh, while sufficient for the whole world, is efficient for the salvation of only those who, having his Gospel preached to them, receive it by faith. The God-Man—the great Immanuel—is the Lord of the living and the dead. His humanity was and is the select tabernacle of the Godhead. Behold the Man and see the God, and wonder and adore. The world's Saviour is the Son of Man and the Son of God.

The Home

No Night There

There is no night in heaven; no night there,
Of weary hours, of ceaseless, brooding care;
No fearful waste, no ashes of despair;
No night is there.

There is no night in heaven; no, no night
Of sorrow there, no tearful, with'ring blight;
There is no gloom in heaven's holy light;
No night is there.

No night is there, but one immortal day,
Where Sun of Righteousness imparts each ray;
All earthly tears shall there be wiped away—
No night is there.

—Selected.

Better be a doorkeeper in the house of God than occupy a high place in the world without God.—Sel.